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RECORD OF GEOGRAPHICAL PROGRESS.

ASIA.

NEW RAPID IN THE YANGTZE KIANG.—M. Hulot has described before the Paris Geographical Society a new rapid in the upper Yangtze Kiang, in about 109° E. long., formed by the slipping into the river of a vast quantity of rock from its right bank during the torrential rains. The very friable upper rock strata became saturated with water and slipped away from the more solid substratum, the inclined plane upon which they rested. The vast quantity of fallen rock blocked a large part of the channel, so that the width of the river was reduced from 270 to 73 metres. After the subsidence of the river in December, 1896, the rapid that had thus been occasioned was a serious impediment to navigation between the provinces of Yunnan and Szechuen.

THE BAY OF KIAO-CHAU AND SHANTUNG.—Dr. Frederick Hirth, in a recent lecture before the German Colonial Society at Munich, spoke of the importance of the Bay of Kiao-Chau, on the south coast of the Shantung peninsula, where the Germans are now in possession. The province of Shantung is the hinterland of the very large harbor the Germans have seized. Though Shantung is one of the most densely populated parts of China, its commerce, industry and agriculture can reach the best development only when the means of communication are improved. The rivers of Shantung are scarcely navigable for small boats. The dikes along the Yellow River, which traverses the province, are very poorly constructed, and its periodical inundations are most calamitous. But even if the river were kept within its banks by adequate dikes, it would not serve as a trading route, and railroads are absolutely necessary for the development of the province. While Kiao-Chau Bay cannot hope for a long time to rival Hong Kong, Dr. Hirth expressed the view that when there is a network of railroads in the province and a rational exploitation of its resources, Kiao-Chau Bay will become an important commercial centre for all the northern part of the Chinese empire.

SOURCES OF THE RED RIVER, TONKIN, AND ORIGIN OF ITS FLOODS.—The French possession, Tonkin, has very frequently suffered severely from the floods in the Red River, which begin in May and inundate a wide extent of country. The view has been held that the floods are due to the melting snows from the mountains of Tibet. M. C. E. Bonin, vice-resident of France, had an opportunity, in the autumn of 1895, to visit the region of the Red River's sources in the environs of Monghoa-ting, to the south of Lake Tali, in Yunnan. He says that the region where the Red River rises is separated by many valleys from the nearest snow mountains of Tibet, the Hsueh-shan, and that, therefore, the melting Tibetan snows do not contribute to swell the Red River floods. Their real cause, he reports, is the monsoon from the south, which carries water vapor from the Gulf of Tonkin to the heights of Yunnan, where the air parts with its moisture. On account of the lack of timber and the slight permeability of the clay soil, the precipitation is poured into the river in quantities too great for the capacity of the stream bed. Hence the destructive floods.—(*Bull. Soc. de Géog.*, Paris.)

AFRICA.

LAKE RIKWA DISAPPEARING.—Rikwa, a lake of considerable extent, which since 1860 has figured upon the maps to the east of the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, has for some years been reported to be drying up, and according to the German explorer Langheld, who visited the lake early last year, the greater part of it has now entirely disappeared, and in its place extends a steppe, over which game throngs by thousands. This steppe, however, is covered by water in the rainy season. The natives told the explorer that the desiccation of the lake was almost wholly accomplished in 1891. There remains of the old lake only about 259 square kilometres in the neighborhood of Ukia and a few marshes in the southeast. Rikwa has thus shared in the general process of desiccation, which has been observed for twenty years among the lakes of Central Africa.—(*Le Mouvement Géographique*, No. 2, 1898.)

THE CAVERNS OF MOKANA.—*Le Mouvement Géographique* (No. 1, 1898) briefly describes the subterranean galleries in the hills of Mokana, which were recently visited by Lieut. Leon Cerckel, of the Congo State force. These caverns are inhabited by natives, and are in the basin of the Lufira tributary of the Lualaba, source of the Congo. Captain Cameron, in his journey across Urua in 1872, heard of these troglodytes, but did not visit them. Lieut. Cerckel says that the entrances to the caverns were formed by the displacement of rock strata, some of which, resting against one another, form passageways to larger limestone chambers. In these chambers the natives store their provisions and everything they require. The roofs of the caverns are only three to four metres in height, and the side walls have projections and recesses which make excellent hiding places and are sources of danger to enemies who may enter the caverns. The explorer visited three of these passageways and the chambers to which they led. At the principal opening Chief Mokana has built a little fort to defend the entrance.

AUSTRALIA.

MR. CARNEGIE'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE GREAT VICTORIA DESERT.—The expedition equipped and commanded by Mr. D. Carnegie, which left Coolgardie, the mining town in south-central West Australia, on July 9, 1896, to travel north-north-east across the Great Victoria Desert to the Kimberley gold fields in the north-east part of the province, returned to Coolgardie in August last after an absence of thirteen months. (*Petermanns Mitteilungen*, No. XII, 1897.) Mr. Carnegie had three white companions, a black boy and eight baggage camels. He made two traverses of the great interior sand wastes, north and south, and a considerable area which had not previously been visited. The chief result of his work is the evidence obtained that an important part of central West Australia affords no prospect of valuable minerals, good grazing lands, or any other utility. Upon the return journey in which the party more nearly approached the eastern border of the province, they met natives who were not only physically of the Jewish type, but also possessed some of the Jewish peculiarities. They entered unknown country in about 27° S. lat., and for many days travelled among sandhills that showed no vegetation except spinifex, acacia and a few other stunted plants. They were compelled to reduce the water ration to a half pint daily for each person, but when only two gallons were left they met natives who conducted them to a remarkable waterhole.

It was a limestone cave and at the opening, three feet in diameter, they found a pole, about twenty feet long, reaching from the opening to the floor of the cave and placed there by the natives to facilitate ingress and exit. The party thus let themselves down into a large chamber from which they crawled on hands and knees through a low passage about twenty-five feet long, at the further end of which was a little stream with an abundance of excellent water. There was good grazing for camels in the neighborhood and the party remained there three days. Mr. Carnegie named this water source, Empress Soak.

On a later occasion they came perilously near suffering very severely for lack of water, but found supplies before they reached extremities. Near Mount Worsnop, in 25° 5′ S. lat., 124° 15′ E. long., they found a lagoon, about a mile in circumference, with fresh water from two to five feet in depth on which wild ducks and other water fowl were swimming. Mr. Carnegie named it Woodhouse Lagoon after Mr. Alexander Woodhouse, the companion of Mr. Carr-Boyd in his earlier explorations. Later, in an area of damp sand which yielded little water, the party spent three days in the difficult work of digging for water in the drift sand, and at a depth of about thirty feet they obtained only ten gallons, to which Mr. Carnegie added ten gallons he collected at another water source.

It was not till the party reached the neighborhood of Sturt Creek, indicated on all good maps, in the north-eastern part of the province, that their troubles from scarcity of water and fodder ceased. The change for the better came about 19° 20′ S. lat., but here they lost two of their camels which ate some poisonous plants. In a land of comparative plenty, the richly watered and grassy region of the Margaret River, Mr. Charles Stansmore, of the party, was accidentally killed by a bullet from his own rifle as he was about to fire at a kangaroo.

Returning from the Kimberley gold fields on the Margaret River, the route of the party was east of their northward track. They were disappointed in their hope to find a practicable route for cattle driving between Kimberley and Coolgardie. The fodder and water problems presented themselves anew and the region between Lake White (21° 15′ S. lat. and 128° 27′ E. long.) and Lake Macdonald (23° 30′ S. lat. and 128° 45′ E. long.) was the most difficult of the entire journey in respect of the fact that it was crossed by many ranges of high and steep sand hills. In a distance of ten miles the party had to surmount eighty-six of these hills.

DEATH OF EXPLORER GILES.—Ernest Giles, one of the explorers who were the first to reveal the vast unknown interior of the western half of Australia, after the transcontinental telegraph had been completed from Adelaide to Port Darwin, died in November last at Coolgardie, West Australia, aged fifty years. He was an Englishman, who was drawn to Australia by the removal of his family thither while he was still at school in his native land. For years he was engaged in business in Melbourne, or in stock raising, and lack of means long prevented him from carrying out his cherished project of exploring the interior. The late Baron von Müller, who did so much to promote Australian exploration, at last assisted him to take the field, and he led an expedition which started into the unknown region west of the telegraph line near the Finke River. He was able to advance only about 300 miles from his starting point, but it was the pioneer journey in the exploration of the western interior. The expedition, though Giles's hopes of crossing the interior were defeated, had interesting geographical results, for he discovered the large, swampy area which he named Lake Amadeus, found well watered and grassy mountain ranges west of the headwaters of the Finke, and those conspicuous natural features, Ayers Rock and Mount Olga, now known as the enormous remains of an ancient geological formation.

Meanwhile two other expeditions, led by Col. Warburton and Mr. Grosse and outfitted by Sir Thomas Elder and the government of South Australia, had taken the field, and so Giles returned to his explorations as soon as possible. His west route led him from Ross's Waterhole, on the Alberga, in about 27° S. lat., across the great waste, following a direction a little north of west, and he paused at last far west of the West Australia boundary in about 126° E. long. The country traversed was most inhospitable, the toil and privations were very severe, and Mr. Gibson, one of Giles's party, missed the track and was not heard of again. Giles used horses on both these expeditions, while Warburton and Grosse using camels, proved their superiority in the exploration of Australian deserts.

For his third expedition Giles secured camels from Sir Thomas Elder, and was entrusted with the work of crossing the unknown interior, from east to west on about the twenty-ninth parallel, Warburton and Forest having already crossed the unknown further north. Giles made his real start from Beltana. On this, his most important journey, during which he twice crossed the whole width of the desert, he saw no lands of agricultural value, but merely a wretched succession of scrub, sand hills and spinifex until he reached the settled region of West Australia. Waterholes were found at long intervals, but between Boundary Dam, near the boundary of West Australia and Queen Victoria Spring, a distance of 325 miles, which he was sixteen days in traversing, not a drop of water was found. On his return route Giles struck far north-east for the headwaters of the Ashburton River, and discovered some excellent pastoral country on the way. He determined the east line of the river basin, and then plunged into the desert again, whose undulating surface of sand and spinifex was no more attractive than his southern route had proved to be. His journey ended at the telegraph line south of Amadeus Lake, and his fame was established for the almost unequalled extent of unknown country in Australia he had brought to light.

INVESTIGATIONS OF CORAL REEFS.

CORAL BORING AT FUNAFUTI.—Reference has been made in the BULLETIN to the expedition undertaken by Prof. Sollas, F. R. S., to the coral island of Funafuti, in the Ellice Group, to obtain, if possible, by deep boring, a solid core of rock for study with reference to the controversy as to the origin and mode of growth of coral formation. Darwin's theory accounted for coral forms on the assumption that the foundation on which they rest underwent subsidence while the reef-building coral simultaneously kept adding to the height of its structure, keeping the top within the 100 to 200 feet of the surface of the water which is demanded by the life conditions of the animal. If this theory were true, barrier reefs and atolls would be composed of coral rock masses of great thickness, for they rise from deep water. Dr. John Murray's theory, on the other hand, accounts for the formation of coral islands by considerations of growth and wave action alone, requiring no area of subsidence nor that the coral rock be more than 100 to 200 feet thick. According to this theory, the coral animal began to build upon other marine sediments or upon volcanic rock. The purpose of the boring was to ascertain whether the coral mass is very thick. Prof. Sollas' undertaking failed because quicksands prevented him from penetrating deeper than about 100 feet. The second expedition under Prof. David of the University of Sydney, N. S. W., was more successful. Boring with the diamond drill went on from late in June last till the middle of September and the bore was 690 feet deep before the work stopped. According to the *Geographical Journal* (Jan., 1898), the preliminary examination of the core tends to confirm Darwin's theory as far as this atoll is concerned. Portions of true reef have been found throughout the whole depth, though separated by deposits of coral sand and the remains of other organisms. This investigation would be quite conclusive evidence of the truth of Darwin's theory in certain areas of coral formation, were it not for the possibility that the boring was carried out on a very steep slope of volcanic rock covered by a talus of coral débris that had fallen from a reef on the summit of the rock.

PROFESSOR AGASSIZ ON THE CORAL REEFS OF THE FIJI GROUP.—A letter from Professor Agassiz (*Amer. Jour. of Sci.*, Feb., 1898) gives many details of his investigations last year among the coral reefs of the Fiji Islands. In his equipment was a diamond drill for boring through reefs, but he did not use it for reasons that will appear. In dredging in Fijian waters, from the surface to a depth of 150 fathoms, an excellent collection of pelagic forms, particularly of crustacea and acalephs, was secured. He had heard of the results of Professor David's boring at the atoll of Funafuti, but concluded from what he saw of the Fiji Islands reef that the Funafuti boring had settled nothing, and that we are still as far as ever from having reached a general and acceptable theory of the formation of coral reefs.

Professor Agassiz went to Fiji under the impression, based upon the writings of Darwin and Dana, that he would find there a characteristic area of subsidence. He was much surprised, therefore, to find within a mile of Suva, a reef about fifty feet thick and 120 feet above sea level, the reef being underlaid by what is probably a kind of stratified volcanic mud. He found numerous evidences of extensive elevation not only on the larger island of Viti Levu, but also on other islands. It was found at Vanua Mbalavu that the northern line of islands were parts of an elevated reef forming vertical bluffs of coral rock which had been raised by the central volcanic mass of the main island to a height of over 500 feet at Ngillangillah, at Avea to 600 feet, at the Savu islands to 230 feet, and on the main island to a height of nearly 600 feet. Much evidence was also collected to show that a great part of the thickness of the elevated reef has been eroded so as to reduce it in some places to the level of the sea, or to leave at other places bluffs or islets.

From this evidence he believes that the corals of to-day have played no part in the shaping of the circular or irregular atolls scattered among the Fiji Islands, and that the recent corals living upon the reefs, either of the atolls or of the barriers, form only a crust of very moderate thickness upon the underlying base which may be either a flat of an eroded, elevated reef or of a similar substructure of volcanic rocks. The Fiji Islands are not situated in an area of subsidence, so that the theory of Dana and Darwin is not applicable to the atolls there, and borings would be futile in that group. Of course there is nothing new in finding coral reefs in an area of elevation, but Professor Agassiz is of the opinion that the evidence now collected emphasizes the fact that there is no general theory of the formation of coral reefs, either barrier or atolls, of universal application. Each district must be examined by itself.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

RELIEF OF THE TERRESTRIAL CRUST.—The well-known German geographer, Dr. H. Wagner, Göttingen, has printed in the *Beiträge* *zur Geophysik* an interesting paper upon the relief of the terrestrial crust. He divides the crust of the earth into five regions, as follows:

1. The *culminating surface*, occupying 6 per cent. of the land area and comprising the lands whose altitude is over 1,000 metres above the sea: the mean height of this region is 2,000 metres above sea-level.

2. The *continental plateau*, embracing lands whose altitude is comprised between 1,000 and 200 metres; it occupies 28.3 per cent. of the terrestrial surface and has a mean altitude of 250 metres.

3. The *continental slope*, from the altitude of 200 metres above the sea to the depth of 2,300 metres below sea-level, covering 9 per cent. of the crust of the earth, with a mean depth of 1,300 metres below sea-level.

4. The *oceanic plateau*, lying from 2,300 to 5,000 metres below sea-level, and occupying not less than 53.7 per cent. of the crust of the earth with the mean depth of 4,100 metres.

5. Finally, the *most depressed area*, comprising the parts of the earth's crust that are more than 5,000 metres below the sea level. They form 3 per cent. of the crust of the earth and have a mean depth of 6,000 metres below sea-level.

The mean level of the crust of the earth, according to the calculation of Dr. Wagner, is 2,300 metres below the level of the sea. The surface lying above this mean level is 43.3 per cent. of the total surface. The total land surface does not exceed 28.3 per cent., leaving 71.7 per cent. for the water surface of the earth. The mean altitude of the continents is 700 metres. These figures are only approximate, first, on account of the difficulty of calculations of this sort, and, second, on account of our imperfect information concerning the polar regions still unknown, and which represent 4 per cent. of the surface of the globe.

EFFECT OF MOUNTAINS ON CLIMATE.—In the new edition of his "Handbuch der Klimatologie," Dr. Julius Hann, meteorologist, and the leading authority on climate as affected by mountains, says that every spot along the northern Mediterranean shores, that is famed for the mildness of its winter climate, owes this entirely to its immunity from cold winds which are invariably shut out by a mountain range. Treating of the climatology of the tropics, he shows that data for the interior of tropical Africa are fragmentary, that scarcely any data are yet accessible for the entire tropical region of Brazil, and very little for the tropical Pacific islands. In the parts of his work dealing with east Siberia and the United States, he shows how the differences in the trend of mountain ranges affect climate. The chain in the west of the Americas lies close to the coast and sweeps west towards Bering Strait, while in Europe, the Norwegian mountain line turns to the east. Accordingly, the influence of the Pacific Ocean is reduced to a minimum in the New continent while the influence of the Atlantic extends far inland in the Old continent. He compares the United States with east Asia, and finds that the States are exposed to the visitation of icy north winds owing to the absence of crossing mountain ranges of any considerable altitude. But in Asia, high mountains and table-lands check the outflow of chilled air from the Siberian centre of cold about the valley of the Lena.—(*Nature.*)

THE CLIMATIC CONTROL OF OCCUPATION.—Mr. R. DeC. Ward, Instructor in Climatology in Harvard University, has a short article on the climatic control of human occupations (*Jour. of School Geog.*, Dec., 1897), with particular reference to Chile. In the trade-wind latitudes, on the western or leeward coast of South America, are the dry and barren regions of Peru and Chile. Between lat. 4° and 30° S., the coast strip is either practically rainless or has a very small rainfall. But south of lat. 30° S., the region of prevailing westerly winds begins and the rainfall increases more and more with increasing latitude until, about lat. 38° S., the zone of heavy rainfall begins.

These great differences in rainfall exercise an important control over human occupation, especially such as are connected with agriculture. In the northern provinces of Chile agriculture on a large scale is impossible, and there is vegetation only in small areas where irrigation is practicable. In the far south, where the abundant rainfall is favorable to forest growth, lumbering plays an important part in the life of the people, and that, with fishing, is the chief occupation. North of the region of very heavy rains, between latitudes 27° and 41° S., there is neither an excess nor a deficiency of rainfall, and agriculture is the chief occupation, though irrigation is necessary in many parts. North of latitude 27° S. the barren nitrate fields replace the green valleys and the vine-clad hills of the middle zone further south, and the nitrate industry and mining are almost the sole occupations of the people. The nitrate ports have to import almost everything in the way of food, including a large number of cattle that come from the agricultural zone, affording an interesting illustration of the control of climate over imports. Mr. Ward avoids the not uncommon liability to overestimate the influence of one factor at the expense of other causes that determine the nature of occupations. Thus, in Chile, it is the geology of the northern part of that country, combined with past and present climatic conditions, that determines the presence of the immensely valuable nitrate and other deposits. But in this region, human occupation is peculiarly controlled by climatic conditions, for abundant rainfall there would probably destroy the nitrate industry, and farming would become one of the chief industries.

THE HARVARD METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA.— In a letter from Mr. R. DeC. Ward, printed in *Science* (January 21, 1898), he describes at length the meteorological stations established in Western South America, under the auspices of the Harvard College Observatory at Arequipa, Peru. These stations are roughly in a north-south line, extending from the seacoast across both ranges of the Cordillera and down to 3,300 feet above sea-level in a valley at the headwaters of the Amazon River system. The station at Mejia, on the Pacific, nine and a half miles from Mollendo, is fifty-five feet above sea level and 420 feet from the sea, surrounded by desert, and is giving data concerning the conditions of the desert belt when its climate is modified by the proximity of the ocean; the next station is inland, at La Joya, forty miles from the ocean, on a pampa 4,141 feet above sea-level, where desert meteorology, including mirages, dust whirls, etc., are being studied. The central station is at the Observatory at Arequipa, eighty miles from the ocean, and in close proximity to some high mountains, whose meteorological conditions are proving an interesting study. The fourth station is thirty miles northeast of Arequipa, at an elevation of 13,400 feet, amid volcanic sand and ashes, where readings of the wet and dry-bulb thermometers are made whenever a visit to the place is possible. Above this station, on a flank of the Misti, at a height of 15,700 feet, is Mont Blanc station, so called because its altitude and that of the observatory on the summit of Mont Blanc are almost exactly the same. The highest meteorological station in the world is that on the summit of the Misti, 19,200 feet above the sea. The observers have recently been able to visit the instruments on this lofty spot only about once a month, and they usually suffer from mountain sickness when they make the ascent. The seventh station is at Cuzco, in a valley between the east and west ranges of the Cordillera, 11,378 feet above sea-level; and the last station, at Echarati, is on the east slope of the east range of the Cordillera at the eastern limit of civilized Peru. Thus Harvard has established a fine series of stations in that hitherto meteorologically unknown country, cutting diagonally across the desert belt of Peru, and extending through a region of increasing rainfall, down to the well-watered valley of Urubamba, which belongs to the Amazon watershed. A large number of the observations obtained at these stations are now being tabulated for publication.

THE HARVARD GEOGRAPHICAL MODELS.—At the meeting of the Geological Society of America, at Montreal, three of the series of these models were described and exhibited, by means of lantern slides, by their designer, Professor W. M. Davis, of Harvard University. They were constructed by Mr. G. C. Curtis, and the purpose they are meant to serve is to illustrate a number of geographical forms in their genetic relationship. The three models exhibited represent a mountainous region descending to the sea; the same area after depression whereby the shore line has become very irregular; and the same area after elevation whereby a coastal plain has been added to the land area.—(*Science*, January 21, 1898)

GENERAL.

FORESTRY IN CANADA.—The Canadian Government has decided to maintain forest reserves in Manitoba and the North West. The heavier timber belts will be withdrawn from settlement and the young trees preserved as the starting point of future forests. In the Turtle and Moose Mountain regions and in some other districts special measures will be taken to protect the reserves from molestation. Last winter Parliament voted a fund to be used to guard timber reserves, as far as possible, against fires.

PROFESSOR GUIDO CORA LEAVES TURIN.—After sixteen years as Professor of Geography at the Royal University of Turin, Professor Cora has resigned in order to devote himself entirely to scientific research in geography and the related sciences. He has removed to Rome and will hereafter issue his periodical, *Cosmos*, from that city.

FLOODS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.—The Department of Agriculture has issued a *Bulletin* by Mr. Park Morrill, in charge of the river and flood service in the Weather Bureau, on "Mississippi River Floods." The *Bulletin* reviews the physical characteristics of the Mississippi basin and river and briefly covers the entire regimen of the river both in its normal condition and in flood. It is illustrated with charts and tables giving phases of the precipitation and the results of inundation in the most notable flood years. Mr. Morrill writes that in the floods of the past quarter century the western tributaties have not played an important part. The great source of floods is the Ohio basin, with its steep slopes from the crest of the Alleghanies, upon which fall the heaviest rains of spring, at a time when the normal rise of the lower Missippippi brings the river almost to the danger line from Cairo to the Gulf. In the greatest floods the heavy rainfall over the extensive swamp region from the mouth of the Ohio to the Gulf of Mexico is also an important factor. The Upper Mississippi is third in importance as a factor in producing floods. It never discharges a volume sufficient of itself to produce a flood, but rising later than the Ohio, it serves to prolong the high water and thus to increase the overflow.

ROCKALL.—A series of papers on the islet of Rockall has been published by the Royal Irish Academy. Rockall is only about 70 feet high and 300 feet in circumference, a small steep rock, rising on a bank of small extent from the abysmal waters of the North Atlantic, about 260 miles north of Ireland in 57° 36′ N. Lat., 13° 14′ W. Long. The recent revival of interest in Rockall is largely due to Mr. Miller Christy, who has called attention to its eligibility as the site of a meteorological station. The rock has often been mistaken for a ship. The shallow bank on which it stands is about 100 miles in extent from north to south and 50 miles from east to west, with less than 100 fathoms of water over it. It is frequented by fishermen from Grimsby and the Færoes and has high repute as a fishing ground. Investigations made last Summer seem to show that it will hardly be available as a meteorological station on account of the difficulty of surmounting the steep rock.—(*Geog. Jour.*, Jan. 1898.)